

Mobile Church Message

06June2010

Earlier we celebrated the history of this day, June 6, by recalling the price that men and women paid for the cause of freedom on D-Day. And as great as that event was, there was another sacrifice that was made 2000 years earlier that is much more important than the events of D-Day.

In ages past, the God of Eternity, for His own glory, created a paradise called Earth and placed man in that Paradise to oversee the land and the creatures God had placed there.

But the enemy of God, known as Satan or Lucifer or the Devil, invaded that Paradise and sought to control man's destiny and defeat God's plans through temptation and sin.

At first, it seemed that Satan had gained a great advantage over God by apparently hijacking God's creation. Satan tempted and convinced first the woman and then the man to disobey the direct commandment of God. As a result, man became a co-conspirator in Satan's effort to dethrone the God of all glory.

Following his creation, God had only given man two commandments:

1. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over every living creature. (**Gen. 1.28**)
2. Man must never eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The result would be death and separation from the presence of God forever. (**Gen. 2.17**)

For a time, man ignored that first command, but he immediately chose to disobey the second one. Against God's clear commandment, man chose to eat of the tree that would give him knowledge of good and evil but which would also result in the loss of the image of God that was placed in him at his creation.

As a result of his intentional rebellion against God, man experienced the penalty of death – of separation from God.

Earth is enemy-occupied territory – the kingdom of Satan and of rebellious man.

Yet God is not defeated. Satan is not God and is not equal with God. He may think that he is winning, but he is not.

Several years ago there was a book on the market: *Satan Is Alive and Well in Planet Earth*. But that is not true. Satan is a defeated being. We are experiencing his death throes and suffering from his continued efforts to defeat Christ.

Now that man's nature is corrupt, God separated him from the Garden of Eden – from the Tree of Life. That was a judgment, but also an act of mercy.

Had God not done so and man had eaten of the Tree of Life, he would have never had the opportunity to regain the gift of eternal life that was his from the creation.

It is right about here in the story that man decided to obey the first commandment that God had given him – to be fruitful and fill the earth.

Only now, man filled the earth with offspring who were just like him – children who were made of the DNA of that first man whom God called Adam.

Because of the sin of Adam, all men for all time are separated from God because of their sin nature. And the evidence that this is true is that all men sin. There is not a righteous one in the bunch. (**Rom. 5.12**)

It is in our DNA to make choices that harm and destroy and lead to sickness and death.

As time went by, man forgot about his calling to give God glory. He even forgot about God, even though the evidence of God is clearly demonstrated in the creation itself. And no man who rejects God has any excuse.

The Bible says, "Ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God." (**Rom. 1.20, NLT**)

The story of man's existence on the earth has been a continuing saga of rebellion. The knowledge of good and evil did not bring

man closer to being like God, but instead moved him farther and farther in the opposite direction.

The Bible goes on to relate the story of man's decline:

Men knew God but wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools, and instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. (**Rom. 1.21-24, NLT**)

The next verse is the one that should create fear in men's hearts.

God is the God of law and justice, but He is also the God of love and grace and mercy.

Man insists on ruling his own life by his own free will. Every direction you turn, man is constantly making reference to his free will. "I have the right of self determination and to rule my own life."

So God, being the graceful God that He is, says, "OK. It isn't what I have planned for you, but I love you enough to give you all of the free will you desire. You make the decision about your own life."

The Bible says, "Since men thought it foolish to acknowledge God, God abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done." (**Rom. 1.28**)

As a result, man became more and more confused in his thinking and more and more foolish – at the same time thinking that he was becoming wiser because of all of his inventions and technology.

Yet all of our inventions and technological advances – our attempts at civilization and seeking of peace through war and treaties and contracts – has only led us to a world where everyone seems to be confused about the most fundamental questions of existence.

What is life, and how do we determine when it begins? If it doesn't begin until after a woman gives birth, then isn't it ok to destroy it?

What is death – how do we know when a person is actually dead – and is it all right if we help some people to die?

What is a family? Is it a binding relationship between a man and a woman who commit themselves to a life together "till death do us part"? Or is it an arrangement of convenience between two partners, regardless of their gender?

If we cannot define marriage, the basic building block of any culture, how can we expect our culture or any culture to survive for very long?

If we do not know when life begins or ends, how can we expect to maintain any civilization for very long?

All of that is the bad news.

Now let me share with you the good news.

God is omniscient, meaning that He has all knowledge. God is not limited by space, and time, and matter, so He is able to see past, present, and future at the same time.

He knew this would be the result of His creation, so before He created the earth, He created a plan – the plan of redemption – His plan for saving men from their own destructive choices.

The Bible says that before God ever created men, He had a plan for saving them. That plan was based on the fact that God is a just God. Since God cannot violate His own nature, then sin must not only have a penalty, but it must be carried out.

The Bible says that the penalty for sin is death. (**Rom. 6.23**)

That means that God could not just wink at man's sin as if it had never happened. Because God is just and totally righteous, He could not just forgive men's sins. The penalty had to be paid.

Yet God knew that no man could pay such a penalty that would cover such a multitude of sin as has been committed by men since his rebellion in the Garden. Such a penalty would require supernatural strength to perform.

So God did something miraculous and merciful.

The Bible says, "God loved His creation and especially man. He loved them with the kind of love that only God has – a perfect

love. Since sin is spiritual, the penalty would have to be enacted against a spiritual person. Since the sin was so great, the person would also have to be a supernatural person.

“So God, who loved the world in such a manner, sent His only Son, Christ, to pay the penalty of death for all of the sins of men so that every man who believed in the Son – who worshipped the Son and followed the commandments of the Son – would be granted the same kind of life that God has – eternal life.” (**John 3.16**)

God did not wait until many became “good enough” to “earn” his way to Heaven.

The Bible says, “While we were sinners – while we were still in active rebellion against the nature and the person of God – Christ died for us.” (**Eph. 5.8**)

Christ – part of the godhead – the three-in-one – the Trinity – stepped out of eternity and into time and space and matter in the form of the man Jesus to do what God cannot do – that is to die. He became a man to do what man could not do – pay the penalty for sin.

By the sacrifice of His own life, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for man’s sins – for our sins – and made a way for us to be reconciled to God. He gave us the kind of life that permits us to access the God of eternity.

That reconciliation of man also brings reconciliation among men so that broken and seemingly insurmountable barriers of separation can be overcome by faith in Him.

But the greatest part of the story of Christ is not His death on the cross. That was a tragic event – maybe the worst day in world history – when man rejected and killed the only Savior of the world.

But all of that was part of God’s plan of redemption. And the greatest part of the story had yet to be told, because three days later, when the disciples went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried, they found it empty.

Angels told them that Jesus was resurrected from the grave.

Jesus had not only overcome our sin, but He had overcome the penalty of sin which is death so that those who believe in Him may have eternal life.

That is the good news.

It was summarized in the writings of a man who wrote most of the New Testament – the Apostle Paul.

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by all the apostles. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, I had a personal encounter with Jesus.” (**1 Cor. 15.3-8, NLT**)

That is what this message is about.

That is the good news.

We are saved by the grace of God through our faith in Jesus Christ. (**Eph. 2.8**)

How does that happen?

The Bible says, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (**Romans 10.9-10, 13**)

There is no other name given among men by which man may be delivered from the bondage and the penalty of sin. (**Acts 4.12**)